

CHANDAMAMA

MARCH 1979

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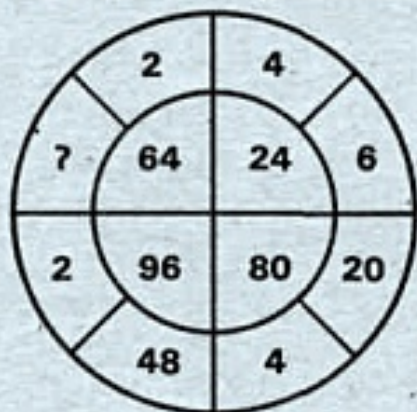
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Statement about ownership of CHANDAMAMA (English)
Rule 8 (Form VI), Newspapers (Central) Rules, 1956

- | | | |
|---|-----|--|
| 1. <i>Place of Publication</i> | ... | 'CHANDAMAMA BUILDINGS'
2 & 3, Arcot Road
Vadapalani, Madras-600 026 |
| 2. <i>Periodicity of Publication</i> | ... | MONTHLY
1st of each calendar month |
| 3. <i>Printer's Name</i> | ... | B. V. REDDI |
| <i>Nationality</i> | ... | INDIAN |
| <i>Address</i> | ... | Prasad Process Pvt Limited
2 & 3, Arcot Road, Vadapalani
Madras-600 026 |
| 4. <i>Publisher's Name</i> | ... | B. VISWANATHA REDDI |
| <i>Nationality</i> | ... | INDIAN |
| <i>Address</i> | ... | Chandamama Publications
2 & 3, Arcot Road, Vadapalani
Madras-600 026 |
| 5. <i>Editor's Name</i> | ... | NAGI REDDI |
| <i>Nationality</i> | ... | INDIAN |
| <i>Address</i> | ... | 'Chandamama Buildings'
2 & 3, Arcot Road, Vadapalani
Madras-600 026 |
| 6. <i>Name & Address of individuals
 who own the paper</i> | ... | CHANDAMAMA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
Beneficiaries:

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2. B. V. NARESH
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**PLUS EIGHT COMPLETE STORIES
AND FIVE OTHER FEATURES**

GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

उपकारिणि विश्रब्धे शुद्धमतो यः समाचरति पापम् ।
तं जनमसत्यसन्धं भगवति वसुधे कथं बहसि ॥

*Upakārīṇi viśrabdhe śuddhamatau yaḥ samācarati pāpam
Taṁ janamasatyasandham bhagavati vasudhe katham bahasi*

O Mother Earth! How do you tolerate a treacherous fellow who betrays an unsuspecting pure-minded benefactor?

—*The Hitopadeshah*

Printed by B. V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd., and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI for CHANDAMAMA CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND (Prop. of Chandamama Publications), 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras-600 026 (India). Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI.

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CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 9

MARCH 1979

No. 9

Founder : CHAKRAPANI

THE JEWEL THAT WROUGHT HAVOC

There is a theory which says that what is famous as *Koh-i-noor*, the diamond that went out of India to adorn the crown of the British monarch, is no other than the mythical gem, *Syamantaka*. (For a brief history of the *Koh-i-noor*, please see the feature "Let Us Know" in the April 1977 issue of your magazine.)

There is of course no convincing argument in favour of this theory. *Koh-i-noor* does not seem to be related to the *Syamantaka* of the remote past. If there is anything common between the two, it is the chain of catastrophes both of them left behind.

"The Story of India" in this issue tells us about the *Syamantaka*. The lesson that emerges from the episode is significant. The *Syamantaka* could serve its purpose only if the man who used it was a man of purity. From the moment suspicion, greed and jealousy came into play, the very gem meant for the people's welfare became a curse for those who were after it.

Does not this truth hold good for all sorts of wealth?





LET US KNOW

Q. Where was the first library situated? Which one is the world's largest library?

R. Mohandass, Bangalore

A. According to the evidence available so far, the world's oldest library was situated at Nineveh, Iraq. The 'books' were clay-tablets carrying cuneiform writing. This library, discovered in 1850, contained about 10,000 works.

In ancient Egypt and India, the famous temples almost always had a library attached to them. In many Indian temples, large stacks of manuscripts—works of mystics—are worshipped to this day.

In the 13th century B.C., the largest library of Egypt flourished at Thebes. It was during the reign of Pharaoh Rameses II (also known as Ozymandius). There was a great library at Alexandria too. It was destroyed by an invader in 7th century.

It was also in the 7th century that a remarkable library had been organised at Nalanda in India. This too was destroyed by invaders.

The Library of Congress, Washington, U.S.A., is the world's largest library. Next to it is the Lenin State Library of Moscow, U.S.S.R. For organisation and arrangements of items, the two most ideal libraries in the world are The British Museum Library, London, and the National Library of France at Paris.

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backload of questions.)



THE LOST NECKLACE

Prabhudas and Gokul were two brothers. They were separated after their father's death.

Vimla, the wife of Prabhudas, was a good-natured woman. But Gokul's wife, Leelavati, was given to jealousy. She was always anxious to see Vimla in trouble. If Vimla looked happy, smile disappeared from Leelavati's face.

One day Leelavati saw Vimla wearing a new gold necklace. That put her out totally. After hours of brooding, she told Vimla, "My sister, would you mind lending me your necklace for two days? I wish to have one like that made for myself!"

Vimla obliged Leelavati with-

out the least hesitation.

And Vimla waited not for two days but for two weeks.

Upon her reminding Leelavati about the necklace, the latter replied curtly, "What necklace do you mean? Do I lack necklaces that I must borrow one from you? Crazy!"

Vimla stood stunned for a while. Then she thought that Leelavati had perhaps forgotten about the necklace. Hopefully, but humbly, she reminded her of the day and even the time when the necklace was borrowed from her.

"Surely, either you are growing insane or you have decided to give me a bad name. You

think that if you accuse me of having taken your necklace, our friends and relatives would look upon me as a thief or a cheat. But you cannot achieve your end. Nobody would believe you," said Leelavati harshly.

Tears came to Vimla's eyes. She made no retort. When Prabhudas heard from her about Leelavati's treachery, he advised her to keep calm. "All told, she is my brother's wife. We should not leak out her character to others," he said.

A few days later, Shashi, Vimla's daughter, came on a visit to her parents' house. She too heard all about the necklace. But she said, "It is not right to keep quiet over such dishonesty." Then she confided to her mother her plan to recover the property.

Soon Leelavati was on her

way to greet Shashi. Shashi was waiting for that moment.

"Mother, where is the new necklace of which you had written to me?" asked Shashi.

"Child, the fellow who had sold it to us has confessed before the police that it was a stolen property. The policemen know that he had sold it in this lane. They are coming to search all the houses here. Luckily the necklace was once borrowed by Leelavati who not only lost it, but also forgot all about it. We are saved. Imagine how embarrassing it would have been had the police found the necklace in our house!" replied Vimla.

Leelavati who overheard the conversation quietly went back home. The same evening she managed to throw the necklace into Vimla's room.



The Prince and the WIZARD

(Badal goes with the wizard to prove his courage and bravery and win back the lost talisman of the king. At the wizard's desire he wins three precious jewels, one from a serpent, another from a vulture and the third one from a witch.)

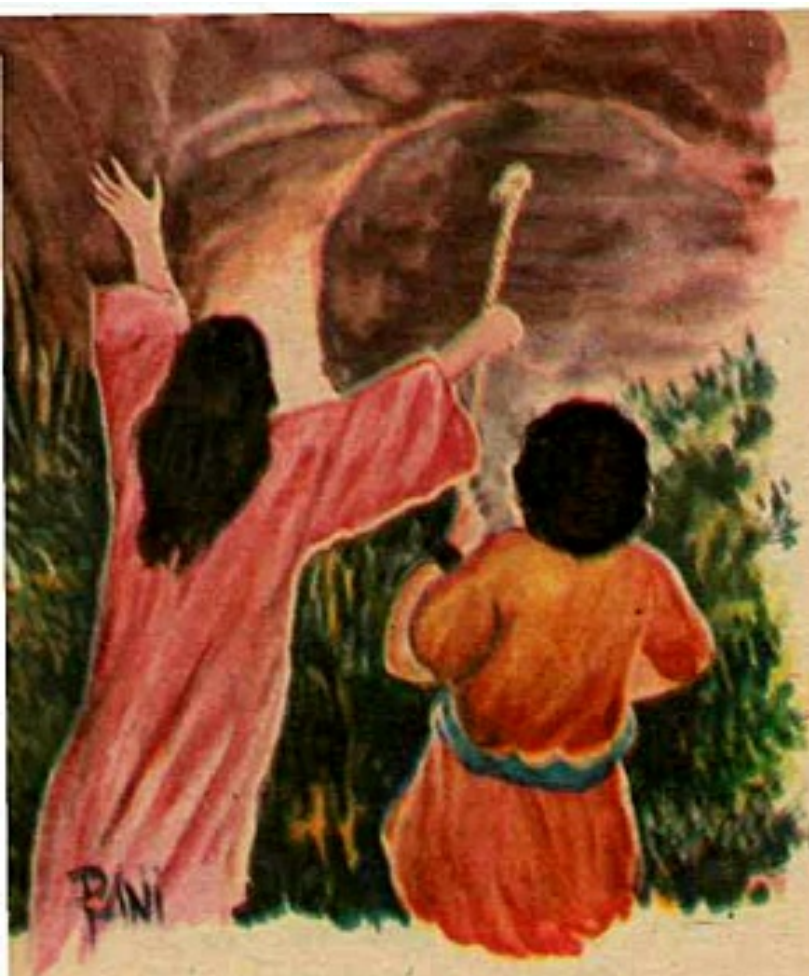
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It was already dawn when, out of the dark pit, Badal climbed to the top of the hillock. From the interior of the pit the terrifying wailing of the witch could still be heard. The wizard rolled the boulder into the mouth of the pit. The boulder sat on the hole closing it tightly. The noise was heard no more.

The wizard patted Badal on the back and said, "In proving your bravery you have surpassed all my expectations. I did not dream that we will be able to gather all the three jewels. Come on, let us go to my abode. You certainly need some rest. Soon I shall see you off."

"What are you going to do





with the jewels?" asked Badal, giving the third jewel to the wizard.

"I intend worshipping my deity, Patal Bairavi, with them. Nobody has ever offered her these three precious jewels, guarded by those dangerous creatures whom you have faced," replied the wizard.

For five or six days they walked in the opposite direction. Then they entered an area marked by tall trees and a number of streams. The atmosphere there was bitingly cold and darkish even in day-time.

They stopped before a cave. But a heavy rock stood guarding the entrance.

"Where do we go now?" asked Badal.

"Why are you getting impatient, young man? You have been with me only for a month!" observed the wizard.

"I believe I have done in a month what could not have been ordinarily done over a much longer time. And, I hope, you remember your promise," said Badal in a voice which matched the wizard's. He was growing anxious to return to the city. He never forgot the king saying that the princess would enter the darkest phase in her life in a month and that the talisman should be recovered during this period.

The wizard at once softened. He put his arm on Badal's shoulder and said, "You are remarkable, I repeat. I am taking you to my abode so that I can show you the hospitality that is due to a guest. Are you not happy to see strange places and gather new experiences?"

Badal kept quiet. The wizard mumbled out some incantation and waved his hand. The rock moved away of its own.

The wizard stepped in and signalled Badal to follow him.

The tunnel was awfully dark. The wizard advanced with ease. Badal followed him with difficulty.

They reached the tunnel's end. There was a hole before them. Although the tunnel was so dark, some kind of a weird light came out of the hole.

"Follow me," said the wizard and he slipped into the hole. Badal did the same.

Badal who had already seen the underground den of the witch was no more amazed with the wizard's chamber. But he observed it intently. The weird light came from the eyes of the heads of tigers which

were arranged in two rows, flanking a fearful image.

"Ha ha ha!!" the wizard burst into a peal of laughter. "O deity of the dark nether region! I am going to fulfil your demand!"

However, he seemed to check his outburst and, turning to Badal, said, "You are anxious to leave this strange region as soon as possible, aren't you? I too don't intend to detain you. Proceed in this direction. You will find a sacred stream. Take a refreshing bath and return. We shall perform the deity's worship. That will be the end of your ordeal. Her boon will



fulfil whatever desire you have."

The wizard showed the way to the stream.

Behind the chamber the stream flowed along a rocky bed. The water was transparent and the stones at the bottom shone glitteringly.

Badal jumped into the water. Indeed, the water served like a balm on his tired limbs. He swam and floated to his heart's content. But, as he was preparing to come ashore, he found himself face to face with a crocodile.

He tried to avoid it and swim away quickly. But the swift crocodile clamped its jaws on

his left arm. Badal had no other go than to give it a desperate fight. With his right hand he caught hold of the upper jaw of the crocodile. As its hold on his left arm was slackened, he caught its lower jaw in his left grip and tried to tear the two jaws apart. While doing so, he struggled to reach the shore and he succeeded too. On the shore lay his sword. He picked it up in a lightning move and drove it into the crocodile's breast.

A flash dazzled his eyes. Sitting on the shore, his tired legs still in the water, he saw a luminous figure emerging out of



the crocodile.

"Blessed be you, my deliverer!" said the figure.

"I don't understand you," muttered Badal, gasping for breath.

"I am a fairy whom a curse had turned into a crocodile. I am grateful to you for your putting an end to my curse."

"I am happy to have done some good to you," said Badal, able to smile at last.

"And let me do some good to you in turn. Beware of your host, the wizard. He plans to sacrifice you at the altar of his deity!" said the fairy.

"What!" shrieked out Badal.

"Now is the time for you to conduct yourself with the greatest caution. I can tell you the way to escape." The fairy whispered her scheme into Badal's ears. Badal looked happy.

Kneeling down before the deity, the wizard was telling her, "You wished to get the bravest young man as a sacrifice. Here is the proof that the one I have brought is the bravest young man indeed."

The wizard placed the three prize jewels won by Badal before the idol. Just then he saw Badal coming towards him.

"Badal, you took rather long





to return. Come, prostrate yourself to the deity and ask her for the fulfilment of your desire," said the wizard in a lively tone.

Badal bowed down to the idol.

"Not like that, my boy, you must prostrate yourself..."

Badal knelt down and made a hurried bow.

"Ha ha!! It seems you have never prostrated yourself to anybody. It is like this," said the wizard and, eager to demon-

strate the posture to Badal, lay down with his face to the ground.

Badal unsheathed his sword and, in the twinkling of an eye, beheaded the wizard.

Next moment the whole domain seemed to shake. There was a thunderous laughter. It was followed by the deity's voice:

"I value the brave and the clever. You have proved your merit. Here is your prize—the magic bell hidden between my feet. Pick it up. Whenever you ring it, my emanation will appear before you and do for you whatever you wish her to do!"

Badal bowed to the deity and found out the bell. He also took the talisman out of the wizard's neck.

He rang the bell. An arial figure was formed before him.

"Out of this region, take me to my friend Ramu!" he pronounced.

Next moment he had disappeared.

(To be continued)

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A STORM IN THE FOREST

The baby elephant whom once Mintoo saved from a pit became a great friend of Mintoo and his pet, Jhandoo. They often met and played.

One evening, while the three were at play, a sudden storm struck the forest. Booming thunder shook the region



"Baby, go away to your mother. We must hurry to our cave," said Mintoo. He and Jhandoo then ran away.



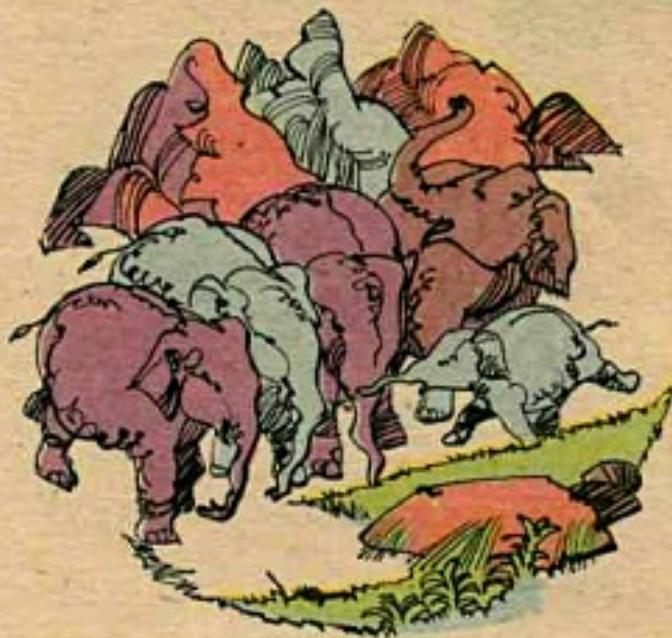
No sooner had they entered their cave than the storm uprooted a huge old tree which stood before the cave. It fell with a terrific crash.





The mouth of the cave was totally blocked. Mintoo and Jhandoo became prisoners inside.

But the baby elephant had followed them. He witnessed the fall of the tree and ran towards the hill.

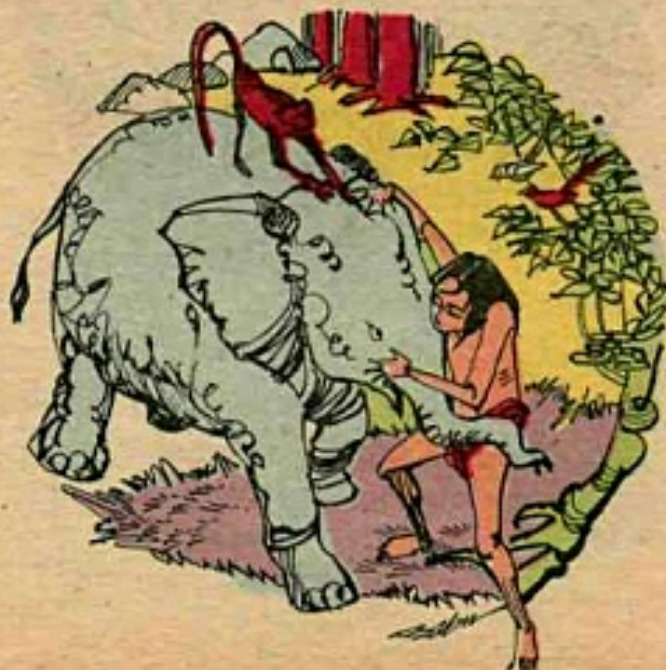


The baby elephant trumpeted and made the elder elephants to follow him. They came and, with their trunks, removed the fallen tree.



After doing their work, the elephants quietly left. The storm had subsided. Mintoo and Jhandoo, now free, resumed playing with the baby elephant.

(Next: MINTOO MEETS MEENA)



The Arabian Nights ORDEALS OF A WOMAN

In Israel lived a Kazi who had a beautiful wife. Her face glowed with such purity that those who saw her came to adore her.

Once the Kazi was required to visit a faraway land. He gave his own brother the authority to act as the Kazi during his absence.

The Acting Kazi was a lustful man. As soon as his brother was gone he met the beautiful lady and praised her virtues in many flattering words. The lady thanked him for his kind

words. But he won't go away with mere thanks. He proposed that they live as husband and wife.

The lady rejected the audacious proposal. The Acting Kazi, out of his frustration, decided to punish the lady. He made accusation before the king that she was a witch. The thoughtless king ordered her to be stoned to death.

The lady was led to a desolate ground outside the town. The Kazi's henchmen threw stones at her. Wounded, she





fell down and swooned away. Perhaps the henchmen were too nervous to linger on because they had a feeling that they were doing wrong. They left the ground as soon as it was dark.

A peasant from a nearby village who happened to pass that way saw the charming lady lying senseless. He fetched her water and when she recovered her sense, carried her to his own house.

The villager's wife was in need of a care-taker for her infant son. The Kazi's wife took charge of the child and lived in a hut adjacent to the villager's house. The child grew

so fond of her that even at night it refused to go to its own mother. It slept with the Kazi's wife, in her hut.

The Kazi's wife soon attracted the notice of a ruffian who lived in a forest near the village. The fellow sent her a message, desiring to have her for his wife. He promised to keep her in great comfort.

But the Kazi's wife, true to her nature, turned down the offer. That infuriated the ruffian so much that he decided to kill her. Accordingly, he stole into her hut, at the dead of night.

The Kazi's wife and the peasant's child were asleep in their bed, with a lamp at their side. The ruffian raised his dagger. But while bringing the dagger down with force, his eyes fell on the lady's face once again. Her innocent beauty dazzled him. He could not keep his hand steady. The dagger pierced the child's heart instead of the lady's.

When, in the morning, it was found that the child had been murdered, its mother took hold of the Kazi's wife and began beating her mercilessly. She meant to kill her. But the peasant intervened.

"I strongly feel that this lady knows nothing about the child's murder. To kill her will be a sin," he said and let her go away.

The Kazi's wife took to the road, chanting God's name and praying for His protection. While passing through a village, in the evening, she saw an old man tied to a tree. A crowd had gathered before him. He was being whipped.

The Kazi's wife forgot her own sorrows and made queries about the old man.

"He is accused of theft. He must pay a heavy fine or die. Since he cannot pay the fine, we are putting him to death,"

some members of the crowd informed the lady.

She remembered that in a purse tied to her waist, she had a few gold chips. She now paid the old man's fine in gold and got him free.

The villagers were overawed by the strange lady's presence. They obeyed her and carried the old man to his house. Under her care, the old man who looked almost dead, sat up soon and even smiled. This was a great surprise to all. They could not help admiring the lady's healing power.

A rumour spread that the strange lady had powers to heal the wounded or the sick.





Slowly ailing people began visiting her with prayers to be healed. The Kazi's wife, moved to pity, began praying to God for their recovery. It seems, God responded and those who came to her were cured of their ailments.

The fame of the Kazi's wife, who had come to be known as the holy woman, spread far and wide. Years passed. One day a sick man was brought there, helped by his brother. As the two waited outside, they were joined by a sick woman who came with her husband's support. Soon another fellow suffering from a painful malady appeared there.

The Kazi's wife now lived in a nice house built for her by her admirers. From the window of her room she saw the strangers. She was accustomed to meet many such people. But this day a quizzical look twinkled in her eyes.

The patients and their companions were soon ushered into her presence. They bowed to her and wept while narrating their plight.

"I shall pray to God for your relief. But, if you wish to feel good, confess if you have done anything grievously wrong."

"Yes, brother, do as you are advised," the first sickman's brother told him.

"My brother! I am a sinner. I stoned your wife to death, when you were away, on a false accusation," said the sick man, breaking into a wailing. He was no other than the Kazi's wicked brother.

"I had once coveted a noble lady. As she would not agree to my proposal, I tried to murder her, but murdered a sleeping baby instead," confessed the other sick man.

"I am afraid, the woman you speak of was my maid. I was about to kill her, quite unjustly, when my husband let her

escape," exclaimed the sick woman.

The Kazi's wife knelt down and looking heavenward, uttered, "God, you have heard how these ignorant creatures have repented for their acts. You have given them the good sense to do so. Be merciful to them and free them from their painful conditions."

She then asked them to go out and pray. However, one member of the party did not budge. He kept on staring at her.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the lady.

The man sighed and said, "I had a wife whom, as you have heard, my brother stoned to

death. But your face reminds me of her. She looked as pure, as graceful, as yourself."

Calmly replied the lady, "Great is God's kindness. Indeed, I am she!"

The Kazi stood speechless for long. Then he shouted out his joy till others were attracted to the scene. Great was the wonder and joy of all when they learnt the story of the woman whom they revered. Only the Kazi's brother, the ruffian, and the villager's wife sat with their heads hung. But the noble lady went over to them and spoke to them kindly and advised them to forget the past and lead a truthful life.



Those Charming

Through the ages and in all the countries the nursery rhymes are sung to amuse the kids. Many of them were composed in some remote past, by grannies or folk poets who are quite forgotten.

But do they only amuse? No, often they are meant to educate, as in this one:

As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives,
Each wife had seven sacks,
Each sack had seven cats,
Each cat had seven kits:
Kits, cats, sacks, and wives,
How many were there going
to St. Ives?

A fine way to make the kids calculate with kits! But the education is not always limited to such small goals. Take the example of that famous pussy:

Pussy cat, pussy cat,
where have you been?
I've been up to London
to look at the queen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did
you there?
I frightened a little mouse under
the chair.



INTERNATIONAL

Rhymes

Even when the cat is out on a lofty mission, she could not get over her habit! Mind you, this is not a comment on the cat's nature, but on human nature.

At times the songs put two things together to show how they are linked. One can't cut bread without a knife; and let us see what logically follows:

Little Tommy Tucker
Sings for his supper;
What shall we give him?
White bread and butter.

How shall he cut it
Without a knife?
How will he be married
Without a wife?

And there are nursery rhymes which are quite matured in their suggestions. What do you think could have happened to the three wise men in this verse?

Three wise men of Gotham
Went to sea in a bowl:
And if the bowl had been
stronger,
My song would have been
longer.



CHILDREN'S YEAR '79

ROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHTY DAYS



An astronaut may be able to circle the world today in a few minutes, but the situation was quite different a century ago. When Phileas Fogg of London accepted a challenge to travel round the world in eighty days, he created a big sensation.

He left London, accompanied by his French servant Passepartout on 2nd October, 1872, to be back there on 21st December, by or before 9 O'clock in the evening.

Mr. Fogg's sensational departure was followed by yet another sensation. A large sum of money had been stolen from a bank and a certain detective, Fix, concluded that Mr. Fogg was the thief and his world tour was only a ruse to escape the police. He sent a telegram from Suez requesting his boss to issue a warrant of arrest against Mr. Fogg. However, by the time the warrant reached Fix, Mr. Fogg was not in any British colony. In order to serve the warrant on him, Fix must wait till he was back in England.

Mr. Fogg, in course of his journey through India, Hong Kong, Japan and America, met with a series of exciting experiences. In India he bought an elephant and while riding through the strange land, saw the Parsee wife of a dead raja being led to her husband's funeral pyre, in order to be burnt alive along with her husband's corpse. His servant, Passepartout, slipped into the pyre and, in the fog and smoke, came out carrying the lady in his arms. The people, for a while, mistook Passepartout to be the dead raja emerging alive and looked on awe-struck. By the time they realised their mistake, the lady and her saviours were out of their reach.

In California, their train, with high speed, had just crossed a bridge when the bridge collapsed with a resounding crash.

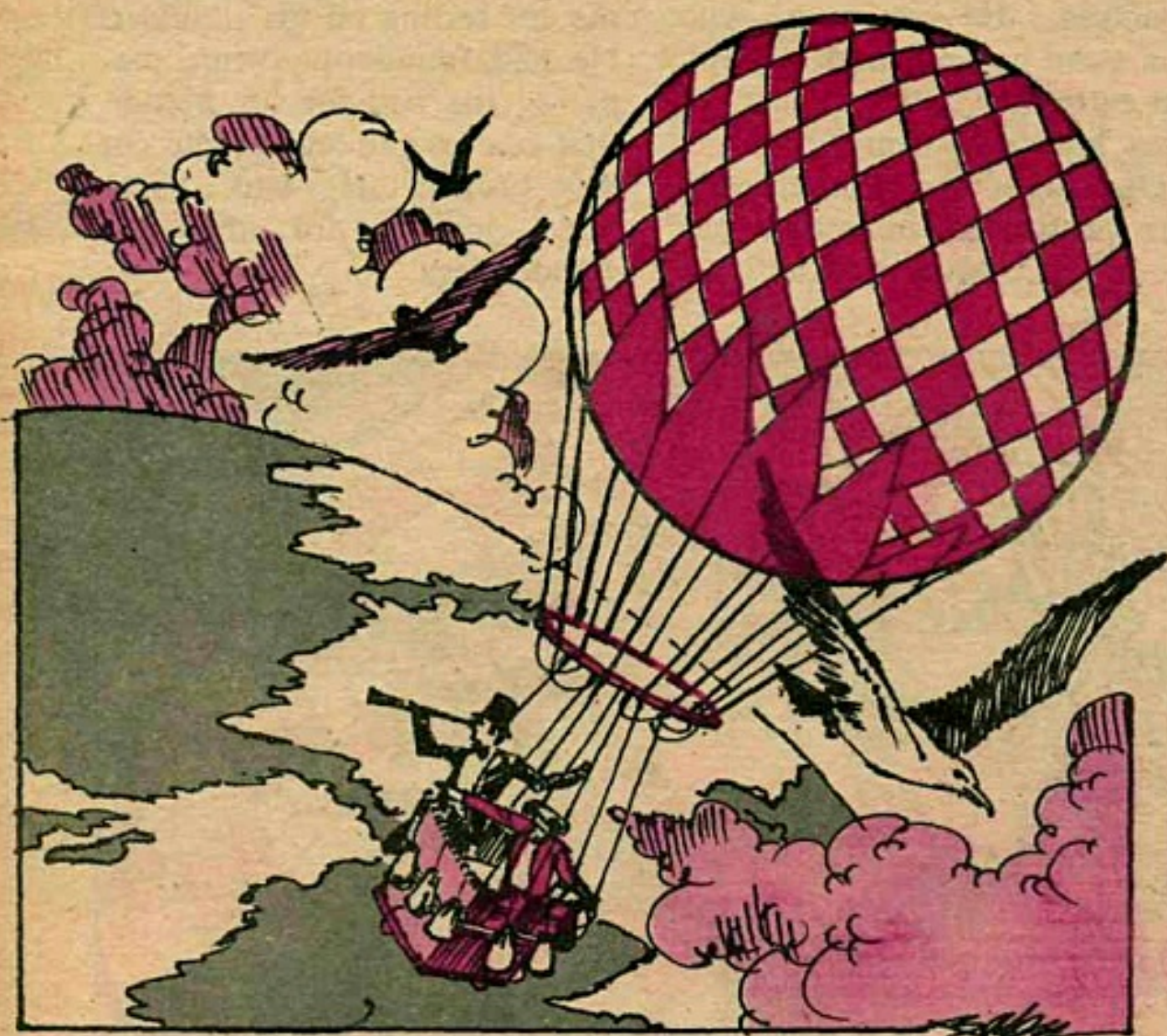
While sailing from New York, to reach home on time, Mr. Fogg had to hijack a ship and then purchase it from its owner. But no sooner had he reached Liver-

pool, Fix arrested him. However it was soon found out that the real thief was someone else.

Released, he slapped Fix hard and rushed to London. But he was behind the time by five minutes. He had spent a fortune on railways, carriages, a yacht, a sledge and an elephant. Now, for five minutes, he was to lose the reward money.

But he had not realised that he had gained a day by going eastward. When he came to know this by chance, he presented himself before his friends on time and received his reward. His feat made him a great object of public interest.

The writer, Jules Verne (1828-1905) wrote this popular book in French.



THE INCURABLE MALADY

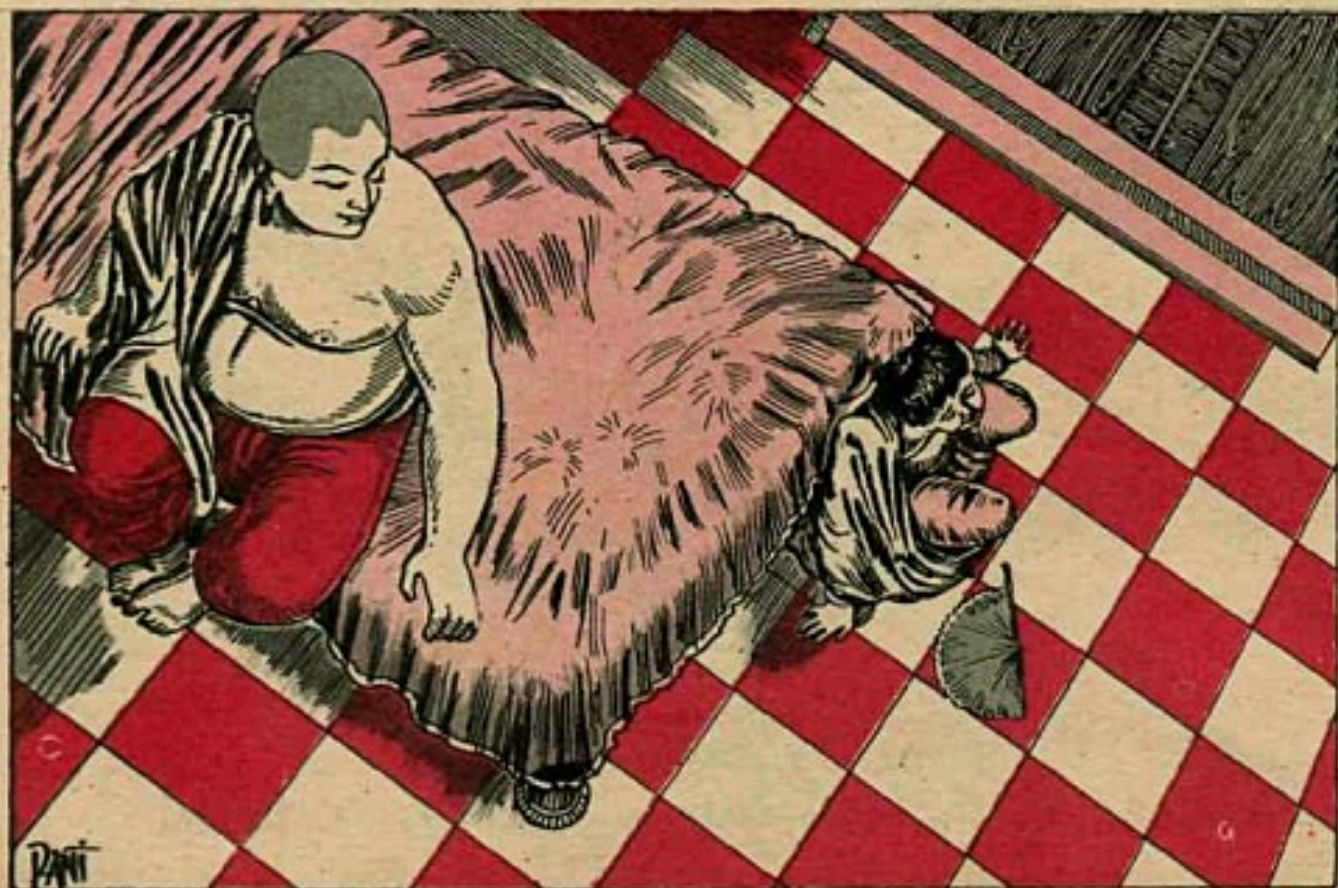
Long long ago, in the city of Varanasi lived a learned scholar. He was a teacher by profession. Five hundred devoted students lived with him.

Among them was one who attracted the teacher's special attention. He was a boy who was good-natured and faithful, but extremely dull. In fact, all knew him to be stupid.

One night the teacher who was the Buddha himself in one of his previous incarnations,

asked the student to prepare his bed. A little later he went to sleep.

In the morning, upon leaving his bed, the teacher discovered that the student sat throughout the night with one corner of the cot resting on his shoulder. He had found out, while preparing the bed for his master, that one of the legs of the cot was broken. He had substituted himself for the lost wooden leg.



The teacher felt overwhelmed by the spirit of devotion the student displayed. He decided to give still greater attention to the boy and cure him of his stupidity through some special method of teaching.

"The boy goes into the forest to collect wood. I should ask him what he saw in the forest. When he would name some subject, I would ask him what it looked like. He would give a simile. Thereby he would understand the relation between two objects. This ought to be a good practice, to begin with," thought the teacher.

That day, upon the boy re-

turning from the forest, the teacher asked him, "Did you see anything memorable today?"

"Yes, sir, I saw a snake," replied the student.

"What did it look like?" asked the teacher.

The student thought for a while and replied, "Like a plough, sir!"

Although it was an imperfect simile, the teacher was happy. After all, the plough is a crooked thing and a snake might have appeared like a plough, viewed from a certain angle!

Next day, to the teacher's question, the disciple replied that he had seen an elephant.



"What did it look like?" asked the teacher.

"Like a plough, sir!"

The teacher did not dismiss the simile as absurd. He thought that the boy must have been particularly impressed by the elephant's trunk. It cannot be said that the elephant's trunk had no similarity with a plough.

On the third day, the student reported about having chewed a sugar-cane.

"What did it look like?" asked the teacher.

"Like a plough, sir," replied the student.

Even then the teacher did not

give up. "Both sugar-cane and the plough are of similar length. That must have inspired the simile in the boy," he thought.

Next day the boy reported having eaten a meal at a friend's house. Among the items served were curd and a lump of sugar-candy.

"What did the curd and the sugar-candy look like?" asked the teacher.

"Like a plough, sir," came the prompt reply.

The teacher's face paled. "It is no use trying to educate this fellow," he murmured to himself, with a sigh.

From the Buddha Jatakas



A lone traveller, while going through a forest, was suddenly surrounded by a gang of Bhils. They were notorious for high-way robbery.

The traveller lost his possessions to them. He was bound to a tree. The robbers began moving away leaving him in that pitiable condition when the traveller broke into a song.

The robbers, struck by the melody, kept standing there as if themselves fastened to the spot!

When the traveller finished singing, the leader of the gang

immediately set him free and restored to him his possessions.

"What is your destination?" the robber-leader asked him.

"Maheshwar, the seat of Rani Ahalyabai. I am going to meet her," replied the traveller.

"Why didn't you say that earlier?" asked the robber-leader. He then asked some of his assistants to escort the traveller to Maheshwar for the sake of the traveller's safety.

Indeed, the name of Rani Ahalyabai worked like magic even in the minds of the outlaws. They held her in awe,





just as the law-abiding people held her in deep reverence.

The traveller was a renowned musician of the day, named Anantaphandi. He duly sang before Ahalyabai and received a handsome reward. But next day the Rani sent for him and told him, "You are a highly gifted singer. But is it not a pity that you do not use your talent to sing the glory of God?"

This changed the course of Ananta's life. He devoted the rest of his days to composing and singing devotional songs alone. He proved highly successful.

The incident only shows another aspect of Rani Ahalyabai's

character. An able ruler on one hand, she was a great devotee of the Lord on the other hand. It was because the Lord was the source of her strength that she could weather a series of misfortunes and dangers, never ceasing to work for the welfare of her people.

Ahalyabai was born in 1725 in a village of Maharashtra. In the village was a temple. One evening a party of travellers took shelter in the temple. As their leader watched the evening worship of the deity, he saw a sweet little girl pushing forward and bowing to the deity. There was something so noble, so pure in the girl's appearance and gait that the traveller decided to propose his son's marriage with her.

The proposal was warmly received when the girl's father knew who the traveller was. He was Malhar Rao Holkar, a famous general of the Peshwa. Soon he became the founder of a kingdom with Indore for his capital.

Ahalyabai was only eight years of age when she married Malhar Rao's son, Khande Rao. In 1754, Khande Rao was killed in a battle. Ahalyabai, then a mother of a son and a daughter,

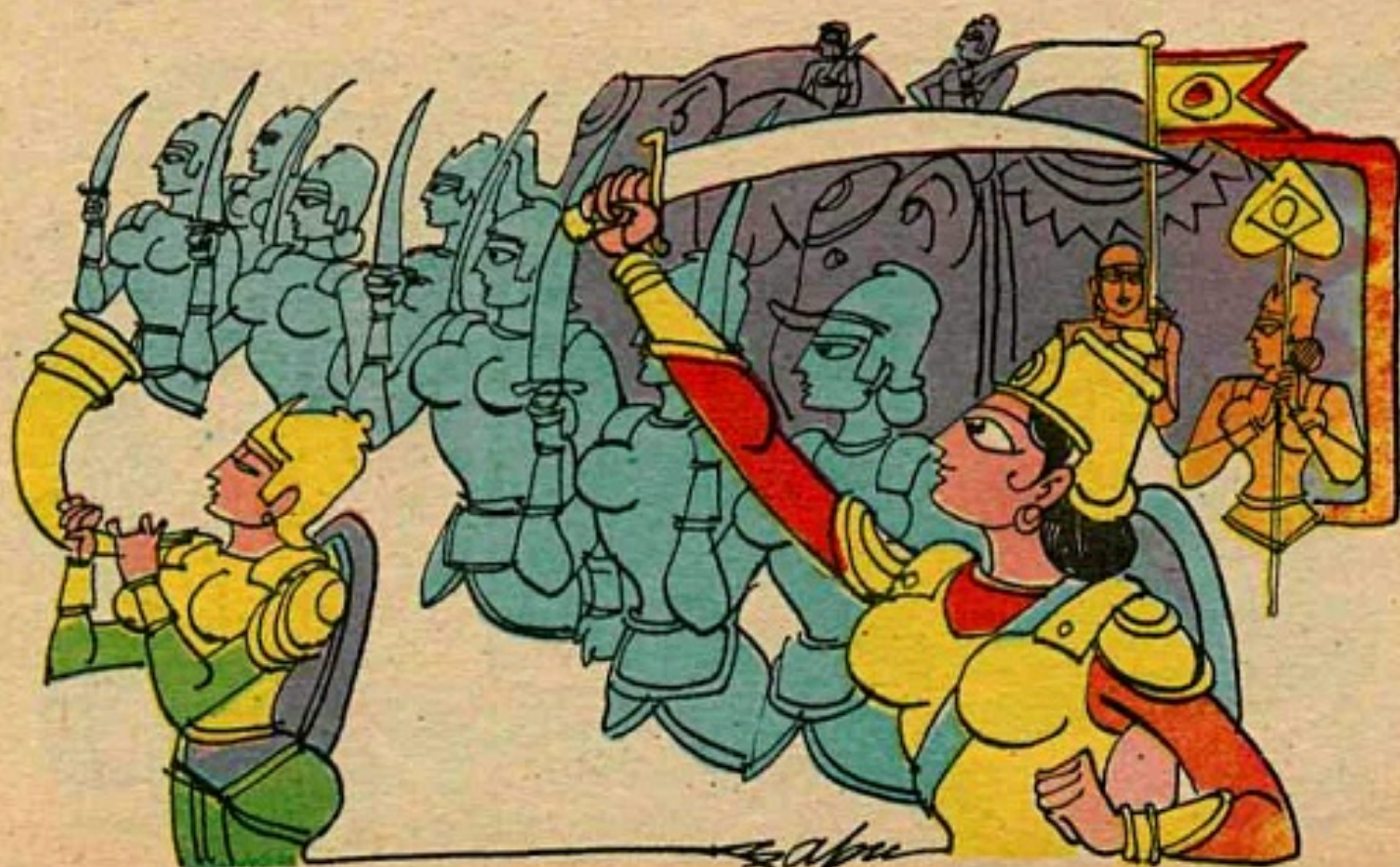
prepared to throw herself in her husband's pyre. But the pathetic imploring of her father-in-law, the old Malhar Rao, checked her from taking the step.

After Malhar Rao's death, Malerao, Ahalyabai's son, sat in the throne. But he died young and Ahalyabai had to shoulder the entire burden of the kingdom. With great skill and dedication Ahalyabai organised a strong army. She even organised a battalion of women.

She had not recovered from the shock of her son's death when a Peshwa advanced upon her kingdom with an army of 50,000 soldiers and camped on

the other side of the river, waiting for an opportune moment to cross it. Ahalyabai challenged him to face her regiment of women. "If I am defeated, none will laugh at me, but if you are routed, you ought to hide your face from the world," she wrote to him. The Peshwa sent back his army and himself came to pay his respect to the Rani.

In 1783 she had to fight a fierce battle with the Rajputs. She herself took command of her army and emerged victorious. This was a great surprise for all the rulers of the time. She put to shame those who looked down upon her for



her being a woman.

Ahalyabai's daughter, Muktabai, was a strong-minded woman. The Rani had lost her son. The daughter, naturally, meant much to her. But, as luck would have it, Muktabai lost her husband and decided to die, following the tradition of *Sati*, in her husband's funeral pyre. Nothing could dissuade her. On the bank of Narmada she went up in flames, while the fond mother looked on and fainted.

There was thus no personal joy left for Ahalyabai. But, for her the protection and welfare of her people was a sacred task. It is this spirit of service

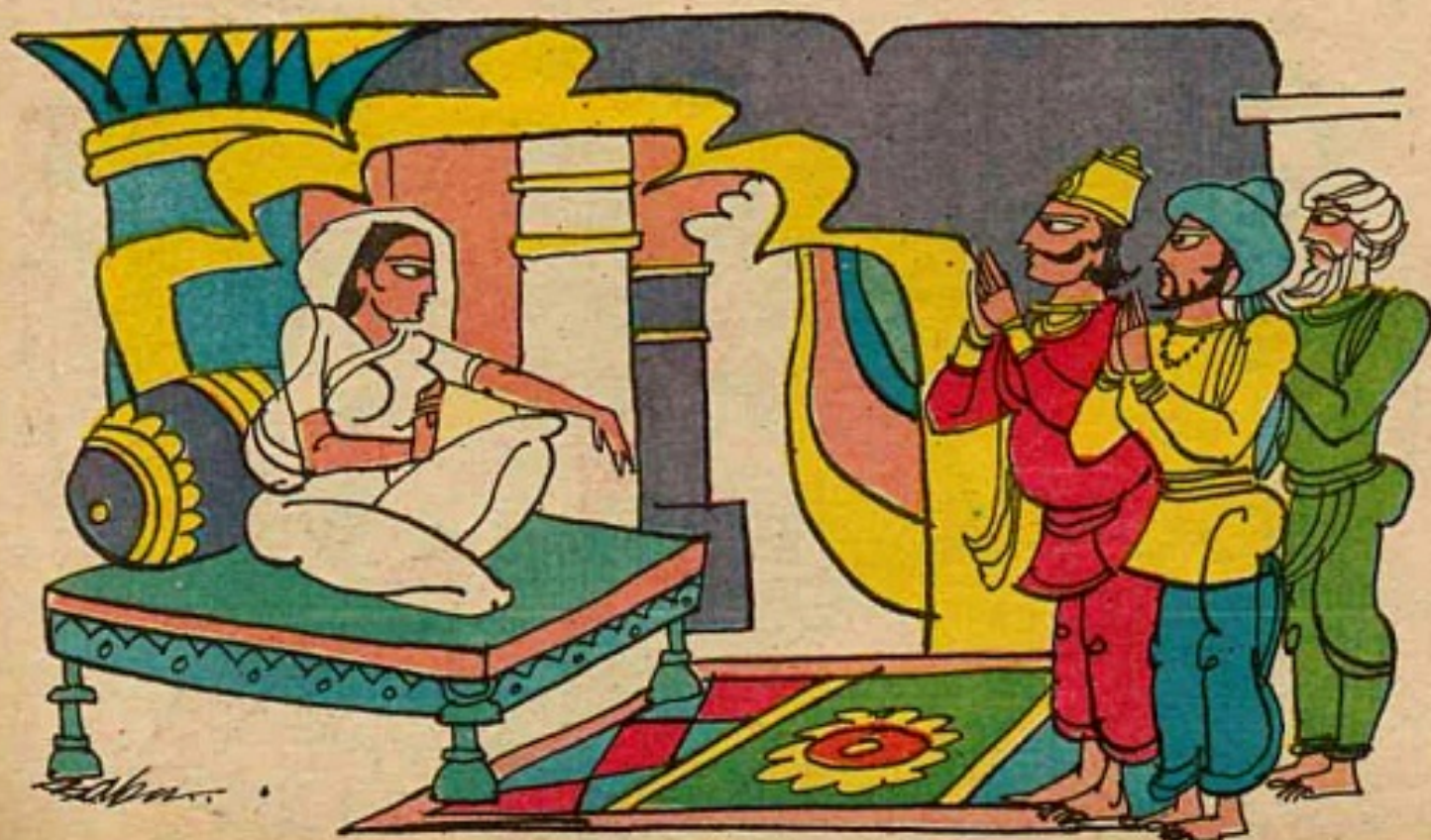
that kept her active.

She introduced many reforms in the laws of the land. She built numerous inns and temples in different parts of India. The Annapurna temple at Varanasi and the Vishnu temple at Gaya were built by her. She became a legend in life-time. Her subjects looked upon her as a goddess. Even those rulers who were jealous of her admitted of her greatness.

But the Rani was never proud of her achievements.

She hated flattery. Once when a poet composed a book praising her, she asked him to throw it into the Narmada!

Rani Ahalyabai died in 1795.

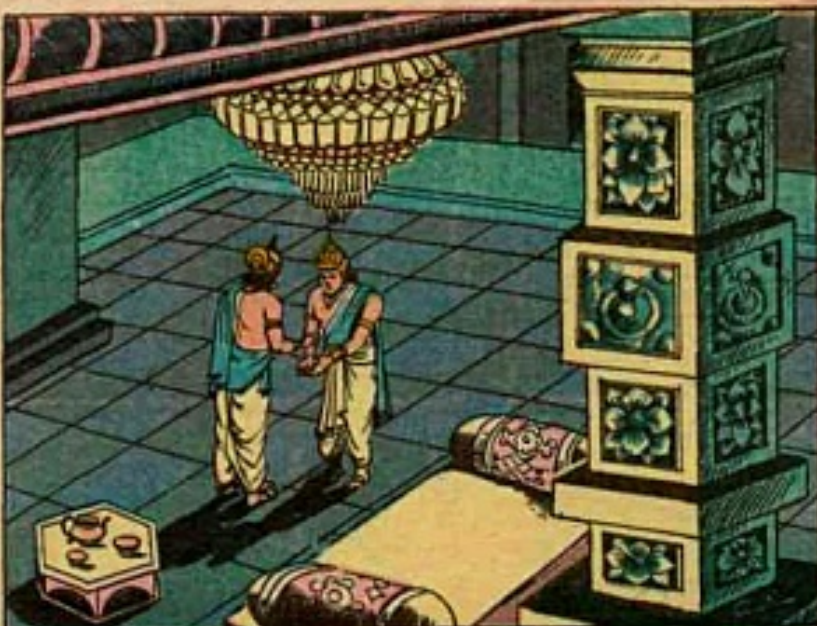


THE JEWEL FROM THE SUN



King Satrajit had endeared himself to the Sun-god, so much so that the Sun-god materialised a precious jewel and made a gift of it to Satrajit. The jewel, named *Syamantaka*, had untold virtues. But one had to be very pure to deserve to wear it.

Once, with the jewel set in his crown, Satrajit came to Dwaraka to meet Krishna. The jewel radiated a splendid aura. Krishna made inquiries about the jewel.



Satrajit grew suspicious of Krishna's motive. He thought that Krishna might try to win the jewel. He gave it away to his brother, Prasenjit, so that it would remain safe.



Prasenjit was not pure like his brother. While hunting in a forest, he was attacked by a lion who killed him and took possession of the jewel.

Before long, the lion was attacked by Jambavan, the king of the bears. Jambavan killed the lion and won the jewel, *Syamantaka*.



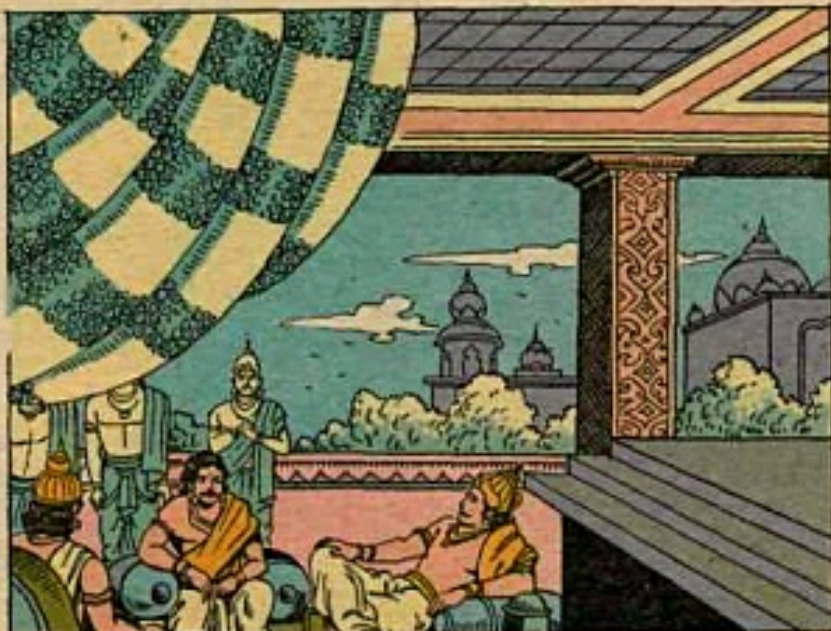
Satrajit thought that it was Krishna who had killed his brother for the sake of the jewel. When Krishna knew this, he deemed it his duty to restore the jewel to Satrajit. He traced it to Jambavan. Both fought.

They fought for long. Jambavan was defeated. His daughter, Jambawati, handed over the jewel to Krishna. Krishna restored it to King Satrajit.



King Satrajit was much delighted at the recovery of the jewel. As a mark of gratitude, he offered his daughter, Princess Satyabhama, in marriage to Krishna. It was a joyous event.

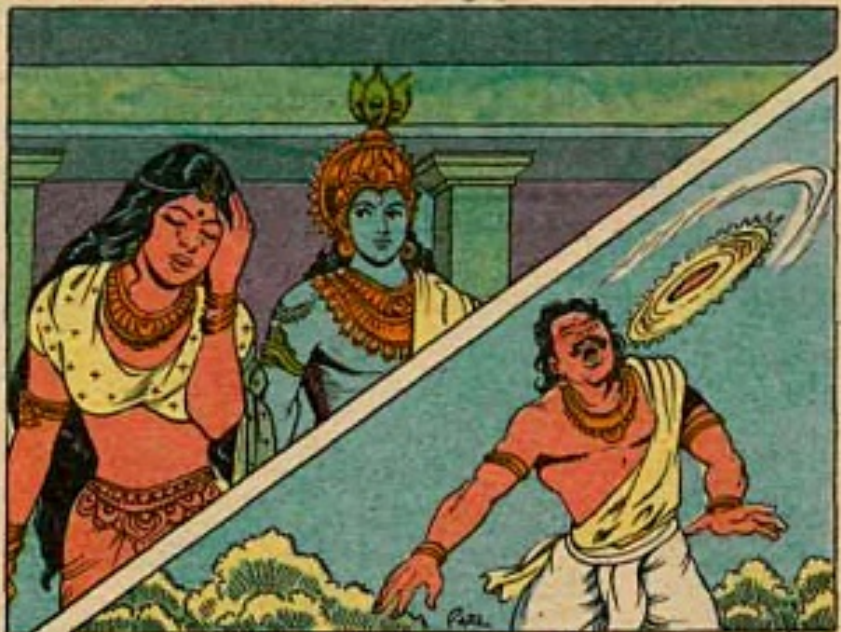
Several princes were desirous of marrying Satyabhama. They were much angry with King Satrajit. They inspired a young man, Shatadhanva, to kill Satrajit and steal his jewel.






Princess Satyabhama came weeping to Krishna, with the news of her father's death. Krishna pursued Shatadhanva and punished him with death. But the jewel was not to be found.

Shatadhanva, knowing that he had endangered his life by killing the king, had handed over the stolen jewel to Akrura. Akrura performed Yajnas and set the virtues of *Syamantaka* into motion. Consequently, it brought prosperity to the land.



Once while Satrajit was asleep in a camp, Shatadhanva stealthily entered his chamber and stabbed him to death. He stole the jewel too.



*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

IN SEARCH OF THE STRANGE PLANT

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. Streaks of lightning showed ghastly faces of the ghosts. The sound of thunder-claps was mixed up with the eerie laughter of those unearthly beings as well as the moaning of the jackals.

King Vikram braved the situation and brought the corpse down again. However, as soon as he began crossing the cremation ground with the corpse on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse said, "O, King, I don't know if someone is putting you to some test. At times a test may be quite puzzling. Take the case of the test with which Princess Ratnaprabha tried her suitor. Well, let me narrate the story to you. That should give you some relief."

The vampire went on: In olden days the kingdom of

Simhapuri was ruled by King Kanchansen. Ratnaprabha was his only child. When the princess came of age, the king was eager to find a suitable bridegroom for her. But death overtook him suddenly. Ratnaprabha ascended the throne. She never bothered about marriage and gave all her attention to giving the kingdom a good administration. She became very popular. The subjects looked upon her as their mother.

Bordering Simhapuri was situated Vijaypuri. A young king, Kishore Verma, ruled the kingdom. He commanded a large army and was quite ambi-

tious.

"If I marry Ratnaprabha, the two kingdoms would become one. Also, I shall become famous by marrying a famous princess," he thought. Soon he met Ratnaprabha and proposed marriage.

"You know, my army is very powerful. If we marry, my army can protect your kingdom," he said.

"Very good. But one who would marry me must fulfil a condition. Somewhere in the Himalaya there are plants which bear flowers known as the Conch flowers. You would fulfil the condition if you bring a



pair of those flowers," said the princess.

"I proceed to the Himalaya forthwith. I shall be back before long," said Kishore Verma.

In a few weeks Kishore Verma was at the foot of the Himalaya. "Where can I see plants bearing Conch flowers?" he asked the people of the area. But the people had never heard of such plants. He then moved on to another area. The Himalayan region was so large that he spent six months looking for the plants. But he had to return empty-handed.

About to enter his kingdom, Kishore Verma was shocked to

hear that his kingdom had been occupied by an invading king from far. He turned his horse and reached Simhapuri.

"I failed to get the Conch flowers. What is worse, my kingdom is under an invader's occupation," he told the princess.

"I shall restore your kingdom to you," said the princess. Her army attacked the invaders and drove them out of Vijaypuri.

"Go now and apply your mind to your people's welfare. Goodbye," Ratnaprabha told Kishore Verma after her army returned victoriously.

Without a word more,



Kishore Verma left for his kingdom.

The vampire paused and then challenged the king to answer his question: "O King, why did Ratnaprabha send Kishore Verma on a futile mission? Does it not show her as extremely whimsical? If she were not to marry him, why did she use her army to recover his kingdom? Answer me if you can. If you choose to keep mum despite your knowledge of the answers, your head would roll off your shoulders."

Answered the king: "Far from being whimsical, Ratnaprabha showed herself as a highly intelligent diplomat and a conscientious person. By saying that he had a powerful army, Kishore Verma was giving her a threat. Had she

refused to marry him, he would have attacked her kingdom. By sending him to the Himalaya, the princess got enough time to strengthen her own army. Now that it was she who recovered Vijaypuri from the enemy, Kishore Verma had been humbled.

"Because it was she who had sent away Kishore Verma and his absence resulted in the loss of his kingdom, Ratnaprabha deemed it her duty to restore the kingdom to him.

"Kishore Verma was not quite clever. Had he been so, he would have first ascertained whether the strange plants existed or not!"

As soon as the king finished giving the reply, the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





IN QUEST OF THE KILLER

An impression that prevails widely is that the sepoy's take bribe. We do not know how far the impression is correct. But we know that there was an occasion when a sepoy, Chait-singh, was obliged to appease an ordinary citizen through money. You may or may not call it bribing.

Chaitsingh was in charge of a bazar. He was expected to roam about all the night and prevent burglary.

But he was growing fat. It was extremely tiring for him to keep awake through the whole night. At midnight he gave out a loud shout to caution the people and to scare away burglars if any. Thereafter he found out a suitable veranda and soon began snoring.

"You are in charge of the bazar for a whole year. But you

have not caught a single thief!" his boss observed one day.

"Sir, the burglars take to their heels at my sight!" explained Chaitsingh.

One of his colleagues whispered, "They are frightened away by your snoring!"

The boss commented sarcastically, "You expect the burglars to invite you to arrest them!"

Chaitsingh decided that it was high time he brought at least one culprit to book.

He did not go to sleep that night, even though it was drizzling. Strolling along a lane, he spied upon a boy tossing on the steps of a ruined temple.

"You must be a thief. Come to the Police Station. Be quick!" Chaitsingh yelled.

"Thief? Not I. In fact, I am hiding here to avoid getting killed!" mumbled out the boy.



"Someone intends killing you, does he?" asked Chait Singh.

"Only me? He might kill my mother too!" replied the boy.

"Hm! It is within law to take hold of prospective killers. Come on, lead me to the killer's den."

The boy hesitated. "If you delay, I shall give you a thrashing!" roared out the bulky man in uniform.

The boy was obliged to lead Chait Singh through the drizzle. After ten minutes he stopped under an earthen wall at the end of the bazar.

Chait Singh understood that he had reached the killer's house. But the wall had a door

and it was bolted.

"Jump the wall and open the door for me. Do it as quietly as possible," Chait Singh whispered.

The boy hesitated again, but did not dare to disobey the command.

No sooner had the boy passed on to the other side than Chait Singh heard a woman's voice, "Please don't kill!"

Chait Singh was excited. To wait further would mean letting a murder take place. He jumped on to the wall. The earthen wall was not only new, but also soft because of the rain. It collapsed under the gigantic fellow's weight.

But Chait Singh had no time to waste. He got up from his fall and ran towards the door of the house and planted a heavy kick against it. It gave away.

Chait Singh sprang up before a surprised couple and a wounded rodent. Obviously, the wife was asking her husband to spare the rodent its life.

"What is this, Sepoy! You are supposed to protect our property, but it seems you are on a destroying spree!" shouted the man.

Chait Singh looked here and there and saw the boy. "Is it

not true that you had threatened to kill this helpless boy and his mother?"

The man looked quizzically for a moment and then laughed and said, "You crazy fellow, you are sure to drive me crazy too! This boy and his mother mean my son and my wife! What on earth made you think that I was going to kill them?"

Chaitsingh learnt all that had happened. The father, at the advice of his wife had sent the boy to the market with a buffalo.

"Don't sell it for less than a hundred rupees. If there are no buyers, come back quietly," he had advised the boy.

The boy returned at night and told his mother, "There were no buyers!"

"Where is the buffalo?" asked the mother.

"Father had asked me to

come back quietly if there were no buyers. He had not asked me to bring the buffalo back!" replied the boy.

"What a fool you are! Your father would kill you as well as me when he comes to know of this!" said the mother.

That had made the boy flee!

"Well, Sepoy! You are too irresponsible a man to hold your post. I should ask your officer to relieve you," observed the man.

Chaitsingh requested him to have patience. He then ran to the market and recovered the buffalo.

"I buy the buffalo," he told the man in the morning, handing out one hundred rupees. "Here is the compensation for your wall and the door," said Chaitsingh again, handing out a few chips more!





THE FORGOTTEN MATCH

Kamla and Vimla were neighbours and friends. Their husbands too were close friends. Kamla had a son named Shekhar. Vimla had a daughter named Parvati. The fathers of the two kids had decided that their children should marry each other when they grow up.

Unfortunately the two friends got killed in an accident. Kamla and Vimla forgot all about the decision their husbands had taken.

Shekhar and Parvati were playmates in their childhood. But they could not mix as of old when they grew up.

One day Kamla told Shekhar, "Look here, sonny, the landlord is visiting us. He proposes his daughter's marriage with you. Speak in a high style be-

fore him so that he is impressed."

Shekhar was not at home when the landlord arrived. But he was back soon.

"Where were you?" asked the landlord.

"On a high tree, singing at a high pitch," replied Shekhar.

"What do you mean? Who were your listeners?" asked the bewildered landlord.

"Why, the birds who flew higher!" replied Shekhar.

"Hm!" The landlord sat in silence for a moment and then left with a gloomy face. His mood left Kamla in no doubt that he had given up the idea of having Shekhar for his son-in-law.

"Haven't I spoken in a high style, mother?" Shekhar glee-

fully asked Kamla.

"You funny fellow! You will never get a good bride," observed Kamla.

"Why mother, who can be better than Parvati?" commented Shekhar and he ran away.

A day later a wealthy lady from the town visited Vimla's house.

"My daughter, the lady's son is a highly placed officer. If impressed with you, the lady may choose you for her son's wife. Be sweet to her."

On meeting the lady, Parvati greeted her, saying, "Welcome, I should be sweet to you."

A bit surprised, the lady asked, "Well, child, I suppose you can cook?"

"Because I should be sweet to you, don't suppose that I should cook sweetly too," said

Parvati.

Just then a fowl entered the house. Parvati picked up a broom and tried to hit the fowl with it.

"Is it right to hit a fowl?" asked the lady.

"Sorry," muttered Parvati, "somehow the fowl looked as arrogant as a mother-in-law!"

The lady got up and left in a huff.

"You naughty girl, you will never find a worthy bridegroom," lamented Vimla.

"You fond mother, who can be more worthy than the one living next door?" Parvati said, although she blushed in the process and then ran away.

Kamla and Vimla understood their children's minds. They arranged for their marriage with each other without any delay.





VOICE OF A MOTHER

Kumar had lost his father in his boyhood. However, his mother, Rama Devi, did everything to bring him up properly. Kumar's father, of course, had left much property behind him.

Rama Devi got Kumar married in a well-known family. The daughter-in-law, Madhuri, was beautiful and smart at house-hold chores. Rama Devi was happy.

Days passed smoothly. Rama Devi thought that she had performed her duty well by bringing Madhuri home. She devoted her time to philanthropy and reading of scriptures.

But soon Rama Devi realised that though coming of a wealthy family, Madhuri was a miserly lady. Rama Devi was in the habit of giving alms generously.

Madhuri tolerated her habit, but did not relish it.

Whenever Rama Devi was giving money or rice to the poor, Madhuri was seen standing and observing her with jealous eyes.

And she could not contain her disapproval of her mother-in-law's habit for long. One day she murmured, "Is it right to give away our wealth in such a free manner?"

"I give away in God's name. He is the real giver. If we help people in their misery, someone would come to our aid should the situation demand it," said Rama Devi.

Madhuri kept quiet for the time being. But she did not seem to feel convinced. She drew a long face whenever she

saw Rama Devi giving alms. On several occasions she tried to prevent her from going her way.

"Look here, my daughter, I am not spending a pie from what you have brought with you. I am spending from what my father-in-law and your father-in-law have stored. They knew my habit well and they approved of it. After my death you can do with the property whatever you like," said Rama Devi.

Even then Madhuri did not understand. She began instigating her husband against Rama Devi's practice. At first Kumar paid no attention to her re-

marks. But her repeated efforts ultimately produced the result she desired. Kumar too began to grumble against his mother.

Rama Devi observed the change in her son's attitude. She kept quiet. But after a few days she left for a holy place and informed Kumar that she had decided to spend her last days there.

Madhuri was positively happy. Kumar too was somewhat happy at the thought that there would be peace in the house. Soon Madhuri gave birth to a son. Thereafter her time was mostly spent in taking care of the infant.

Once in a while Kumar



thought of his mother. Is it right to remain away from her in her old age?—he often asked himself. But he reconciled to the situation.

One day Kumar overheard Madhuri telling a woman from the neighbourhood, "I must keep a close eye on my son. Such is the spirit of our times that boys, upon growing up, hardly care for their parents. They become playthings in the hands of their wives. Poor mother! She won't even hesitate to lay down her life for her son, but the son won't hesitate to ignore and humiliate the mother at the smallest suggestion from his wife. I shall never let my son grow up into such a fool."

Kumar stood stunned for a while. Then he suddenly started packing up his clothes.

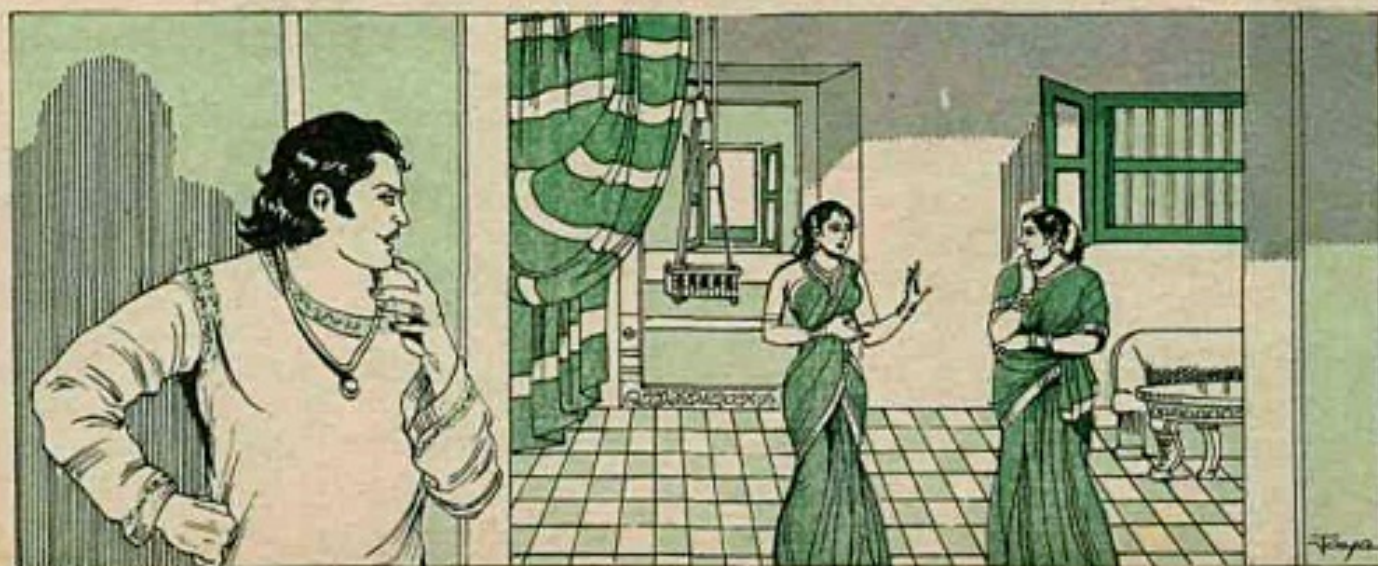
"Where are you going?" asked Madhuri in surprise.

"To bring back mother," replied Kumar.

"What is the cause of this hasty decision?" asked Madhuri.

"Madhuri! I am thankful to you. You have opened my eyes. You are alert to see that your son does not behave like a fool in future. But you did not mind making your husband behave like a fool. Through your voice, I have heard the voice of my mother. I can neither eat a morsel nor sleep a wink until my mother pardons me," explained Kumar.

Madhuri realised her folly and wept. She accompanied Kumar to the holy place and apologised to Rama Devi and induced her to return home.





THE SAGA OF SHIVA

From the silent peak of Kailash the *ganas* began descending towards the plains. The snow-clad mountains seemed to tremble with their foot falls. Their shrieks were echoed and re-echoed in the innumerable hills.

They crossed the ranges and pushed through the rivers and the streams that came on their way.

As the army of supernatural beings, *ganas*, led by Virbhadrā and Bhadrakālī, approached the seat of King Daksha's *Yajna*, the sky grew dark and the region shook with an ominous noise. Soon, along with weird lightnings, the clouds rained strange things such as snakes and scorpions. Columns of dense smoke emanated from the *Yajna* and drove the priests away.

"Daksha has done something

awfully wrong," remarked some. Many more thought it safe to flee the place without waiting to make or hear any comment.

Soon the *ganas* surrounded the place. Even while running away, the gods and sages could not escape harassment in the hands of the angry *ganas*.

Yelling and spitting fire, the supernatural beings pulled down and burnt to ashes the golden canopies and arches set up to welcome the guests. They smashed the utensils with which the priests were performing the rite.

While his followers did this havoc, Virbhadrā himself sought Daksha out and with one swing of his sword, beheaded him.

Virbhadrā then flung Daksha's head into the flames. It got consumed in the fire. Only then



he called back his followers and withdrew.

Gods and sages who retreated from Daksha's palaces met Brahma and told him all that had happened. Brahma led them to Vishnu. Thereafter both Brahma and Vishnu, followed by the gods and sages, reached Mount Kailash. Shiva sat engrossed in a trance, guarded by the *ganas*. The visitors waited for him to open his eyes.

At last, when Shiva looked at them, they said, "Be pleased to revive Daksha to life. It is necessary that the rite he had begun should be duly concluded.

Otherwise the earth would suffer from drought."

Shiva walked down to Daksha's place and saw that Daksha's head had been completely consumed by the fire. He asked Virbhadrā to bring a head to replace the lost one. Instead of wasting a human life, Virbhadrā cut down a sheep and returned with its head.

The sheep's head was put on Daksha's body and Daksha came back to life. He bowed down to Shiva and apologised for his ignorant conduct. Shiva pardoned him and let him complete the *Yajna*. Further, he gave him a boon saying that the seat of his *Yajna* will ever be remembered.

With great remorse, Shiva then picked up Sati's body. Placing the body on his shoulder, he began to roam about, forgetful of everything. He continued to roam about, immersed in sorrow, for long.

It was Vishnu who applied his *Sudarsana Chakra* and cut down Sati's body into several pieces. They fell at various places all of which, in course of time, became famous as holy seats of the Divine Mother.

Shiva then returned to Kailash and got immersed in

trance again.

The Spirit of the Himalaya had incarnated as King Himavan. His wife, Mena, was a dear friend of Sati. When she heard of Sati's death, she was deeply distressed. She most ardently desired Sati to be re-born as her daughter.

One day Vishnu and Brahma told Himavan that a demon named Tarakasur had become a cause of deep concern for the earth. He can be killed only by a new god born of Shiva and his consort. It was urgently necessary for Sati to reincarnate so that she could marry Shiva and give birth to the powerful god. King Himavan and Queen Mena must meditate upon Sati's soul to be born as their daughter.

Himavan and Mena went over to Vindyachala and tried to invoke the Divine Mother, with great devotion. At last the Mother manifested before them and consented to fulfil their desire.

True to her promise, the Divine Mother reincarnated as the daughter of Himavan and Mena. She was called Parvati.

Himavan had several sons including Mount Mainak. But the birth of the daughter



filled his heart with great joy. The charming region of the Himalaya grew festive.

The child grew up to be an extremely beautiful and brave girl. She was often seen moving about riding lions. Although she was so young, at times she conducted herself toward her maids as if she was their mother.

In no time she mastered all the arts. She proved her great gift in music, painting etc. But whenever she sat down to draw, she drew the pictures of Lord Shiva. She loved to be addressed as Shivani.

One day Narada, the great



sage, came to King Himavan and saw Parvati. In her he recognised all the signs of divinity.

"O King, your daughter is no ordinary princess, but the consort of Shiva. Why don't you propose her marriage with him?" asked the sage.

The royal couple knew that indeed it was time for doing the needful in that direction.

Shiva was then engrossed in his silent meditation on the snow-clad Kailash. King Himavan, Queen Mena, and Parvati, proceeded to his presence.

The passage to Kailash reminded Parvati of her familiarity with the area in her earlier life. She felt thrilled at the thought of meeting her Lord.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



THE PRECIOUS INHERITANCE

King Jaisheel was in the habit of buying, without bargaining, whatever one brought for sale in the morning. This had become almost a sacred practice with him.

One morning, an old Brahmin was heard shouting before the palace, "I wish to sell, only for a hundred gold mohurs, what has remained in our family for five generations!"

"What is the precious inheritance you have preserved for five generations?" asked the curious king, summoning the Brahmin in.

"My lord, I shall show it only after receiving the price!" said the Brahmin.

The king handed over the price to him. The Brahmin then opened his bale. It contained a worn-out blanket.

"My lord! This one symbolises the poverty which has remained with us for past five generations. Of course, this is useless for you. You may throw it away," said the Brahmin.





THE WHITE-COLLAR BANDIT

This happened in the kingdom of Vidarbha. An area of the kingdom which was separated from the mainland by a forest, once suffered from an earthquake. The king immediately summoned one of his young officers named Jiwan who hailed from that area.

"Take ten thousand gold coins. Go to your area and distribute the coins among the people. They should use the money to reconstruct their houses," the king told the officer.

"As you desire, my lord!" said the officer with due humility. He then received the amount from the royal treasury and set out for his home area.

There was a meaningful smile on his lips when he was on the road.

Soon he entered the forest, that he must cross in order to reach the area hit by the earthquake.

In the forest lived a dacoit named Gangasingh. His followers pounced upon the officer and led him to Gangasingh.

The officer smiled and said, "I knew that this will happen. Well, I am carrying ten thousand gold coins!"

Gangasingh looked surprised. The officer then explained his plan to him, saying, "I shall report, to the king that you snatched the money. Of course,

you must remain prepared to go to jail in case you are caught. But I shall see that you escape soon. We can divide the money between us."

Gangasingh said that he will think on the proposal. Jiwan remained as his guest for two days. Gangasingh's only child, a daughter, looked after him. On the third day Gangasingh told the officer, "I don't understand why I should agree to your proposal and go to jail instead of relieving you of the entire amount!"

"I shall tell you why. I am ready to marry your daughter. Soon I am going to be the

king's minister. You would be then known as the minister's father-in-law. Think of it," said Jiwan.

Gangasingh was delighted. He agreed to act as suggested.

"Let my share of the money remain with you so that the king's people cannot recover it when they come to look for it," Gangasingh suggested.

Jiwan rolled on the dust and appeared before the king in his soiled clothes and said that he lost the money to the notorious bandit. The king immediately ordered his sepoy to capture the bandit.

When the sepoy confronted



Gangasingh, he offered no resistance. He was caught and produced before the king. The king's instant order was that he was to be hanged.

Gangasingh's daughter who knew of the plan had thought that her father would be sent to jail. Shocked, she came to meet Jiwan. The cruel officer ordered his servants to drive her out.

With ten thousand gold coins, Jiwan was a rich man. He began dreaming of his marriage with the minister's daughter.

But, in the evening, he was surprised to hear a familiar voice. He turned back and saw Gangasingh!

"How dared you insult my daughter? Now, bring out my share of the money or I shall throttle you to death!" shouted Gangasingh.

"How did you come out?" a

nervous Gangasingh stammered out.

"This old man helped me. Now come out with the money or I ask the king to search your house!" he shouted again.

Jiwan faltered into his room and came out with five thousand gold coins. Next moment the old man shed his disguise. He was none other than the king!

"When I learnt that you were crossing the forest without bodyguards, I suspected your motive. When Gangasingh allowed himself to be captured without any resistance, I was sure that there was a conspiracy between you two!" said the king and he added, "You are a much worse bandit, the white-collar one!"

Jiwan was thrown out of the kingdom. Gangasingh was pardoned. The king found a nice bridegroom for his daughter.



THE PROUD EXHIBITION

There was a certain raja who was quite fond of making exhibition of his wealth.

Once he bought a precious diamond and invited the neighbouring rajas and landlords to have a look at it. It was evening when the distinguished guests gathered in the raja's durbar hall. The diamond, kept in a small plate of gold, was placed on a table. All the guests admired it.

But, at one point, the raja's minister saw that the diamond was missing. Obviously, one of the guests had picked it up while the others were talking.

After a moment's stunning silence, the minister said, "O Noble guests! It would be embarrassing to search you. Better we remove the light for two minutes. Let him who has taken the diamond keep it back in the gold plate."

The light was removed and it was all dark. But, after two minutes, when the light was brought back, it was found that the gold dish too was gone!





A STRANGE TEST

In a certain village lived a wealthy man named Kanak. Although he was the richest man in the locality, he never stopped desiring to possess more wealth. In a hundred ways he exploited the people.

But Sumati, Kanak's wife, was quite different by nature. She was much pained at her husband's unending greed and she often told him, "Don't forget that you have to suffer the consequences of your doing. Why don't you stop accumulating money?"

"It is to prove my superiority over others, my manliness, that I love to grow ever richer," Kanak explained.

Days passed. Kanak con-

tinued to grow richer. His wife got disgusted reminding him of his sins. At last she chose to keep quiet. Kanak carried on his dishonest business with equal zeal.

A yogi came to live in the meadow on the river-bank, close to the village. A man of miracles, he planted a tree which, in course of a few years, began yielding a strange kind of fruit, resembling the mango.

When people came to learn about the astonishing quality of the fruit there was a great sensation. The fruit and the tree became to talk of the region.

Whoever plucked a fruit and ate it standing under the tree,

changed into some animal or the other, depending on his nature. There were only a few who did not change.

But as soon as one came a few yards away from the tree, one got back his or her human form.

This created a great stir in Kanak's village. Many came to see the miracle. Kanak and Sumati too stood in the crowd, enjoying the fun.

With bated breath everybody saw what happened. It was just fantastic.

A retired general who ate a fruit suddenly turned into a tiger. He roared and jumped

at the crowd. But as soon as he was beyond the shadow of the tree, he changed into the gentleman that he was.

A good-natured teacher changed into a cow. A fellow notorious for his wickedness was seen changing into a cobra. A flatterer turned a dog. A man who was never tired of doling out advice to others changed into a donkey!

A money-lender changed into a vulture. But as he began flying, he fell down with a bang and became human again.

Thus, there were so many who, according to their inner nature, turned into different



animals for brief moments.

Kanak was very much desirous of trying the fruit on himself. But he did not dare to make the experiment lest he should be changed into some despicable animal, making himself a laughing-stock for others.

However, curiosity got the better of him and he visited the spot at night, accompanied by his wife.

They plucked two fruits and ate them. There was no change in Sumati. But Kanak suddenly changed into a ghastly-looking ghoul.

"I am hungry!" he shrieked out and tried to pounce on Sumati who ran for life. Kanak, of course, became his old human self after pursuing her only for a few yards.

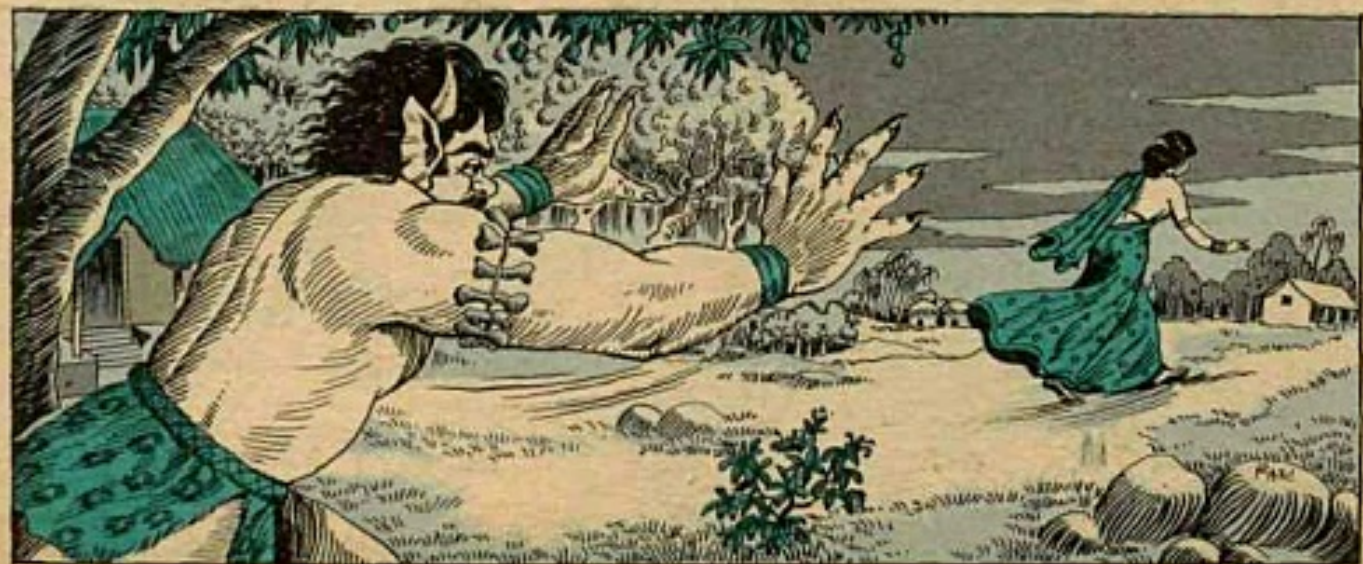
But the experience proved too shocking for Sumati to forget

it. She refused to come near her husband even when Kanak was his normal self.

Kanak met the yogi and told him about his plight. The yogi called Sumati and said, "My daughter, it is a pity that your husband, because of his excessive greed for money, appeared to you as a ghoul. But is it not good that he has now known his own nature? Be kind to him and live with him as of old. He will change."

Turning to Kanak, the yogi said, "I have cut down the miracle tree. There is no more fear for you or others to stand exposed in your natures. But must you remain content with being human being only in form and not in nature?"

Kanak heard the yogi's admonition with his head hung. He promised to behave better and, indeed, he grew better.



THE TEMPLE ON SHANKARACHARYA HILL

The beautiful city of Srinagar in Kashmir reaches its highest point at the Shankaracharya hill. Atop this 1,000-foot high hill is situated a temple, built twentythree centuries ago, by Ashoka's son, Jaluka. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is of great archaeological interest.

From the top of the hill can be seen the Mughal gardens and the river Jhelum spanned by nine bridges.



A FARMER SAVED A REPUBLIC

Even two thousand five hundred years ago, Rome was a republic. The people elected their rulers.

In times of peace the common people lived as farmers. They turned into soldiers when necessary.

Once, in a narrow valley, the Roman army was surrounded by an enemy army. The enemy planned to starve the Roman army to surrender.

An old farmer got the news in the afternoon. He stopped ploughing and called all the able-bodied Romans to follow him, each carrying a long wooden plank or several wooden stakes.

At the dead of night, he made his followers silently surround the enemy and plant the planks before themselves. At dawn the enemy found that just as they had encircled the Roman army, they too had been encircled by another army of Romans who had erected a wall of wooden planks around.

The enemy gave up. Romans were victorious. The farmer was requested to rule Rome as the dictator. But he returned to his field and resumed ploughing.

His name was Cincinnatus.



PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Devidas Kasbekar



Mr. S. Paramasivan

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs. 25/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The prize for the January '79 contest goes to :
Mr. Jagbandhu Modi, Gua Upper Colony,
P. O. Gua - 833 213, Dist. Singhbhum (Bihar).

The Winning Entry : 'Music with Palms' — 'Asking for Alms'



**PICKS FROM
OUR MAIL BAG**

Dear Sir,

I have read a collection of the Arabian Nights stories translated by Sir Richard Burton and edited by P. J. Newby. The stories published in your magazine are not there in that book. From which edition are you taking them?

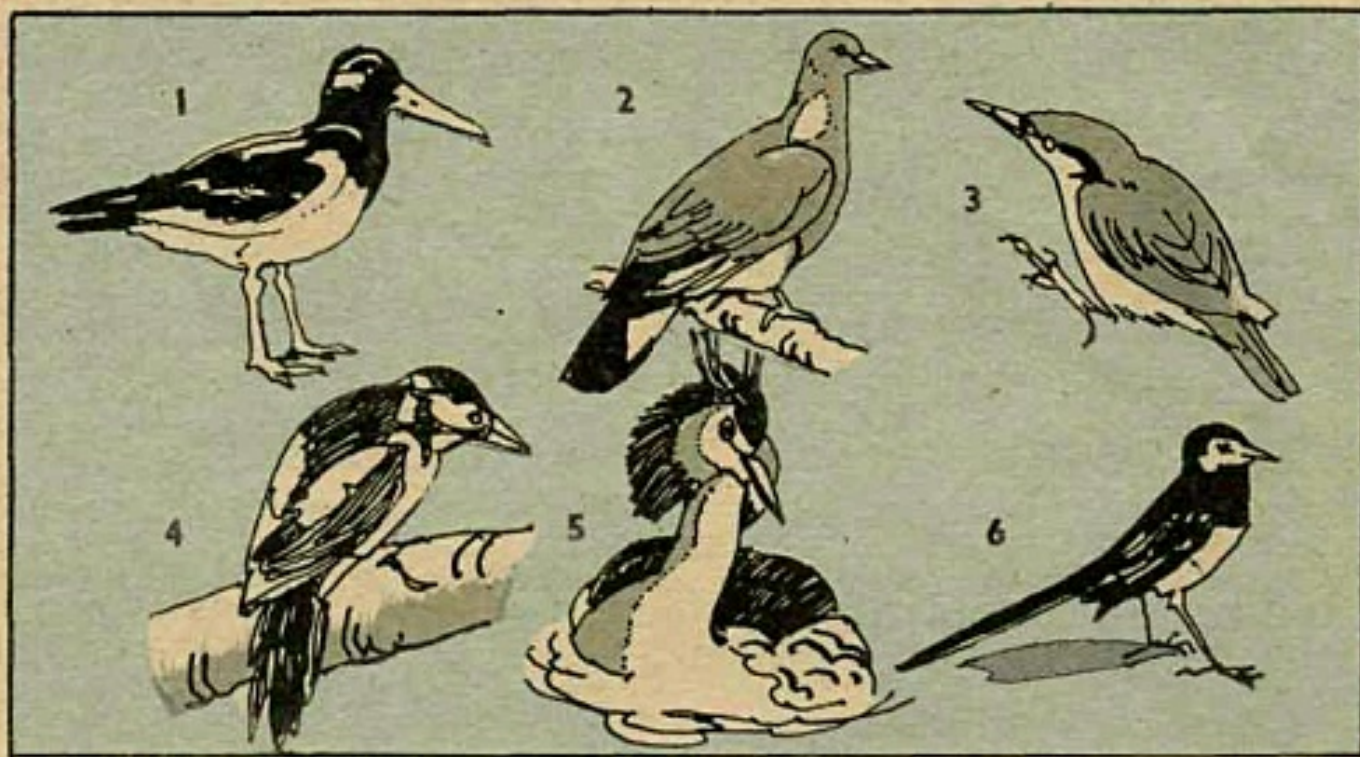
Mrs. Vijay Gopinath, Sharanpur, Kerala.

The volume you have read is only a selection from Sir Richard Burton's monumental translation, available in 16 volumes. The first European translation of the original had appeared in French 1704-17. The First English translation was made in 1839, followed by Sir Burton's in 1885-88. Our selection is made from the basic stock of 264 tales. We are not reproducing any old translation, but retelling them specially for our readers.

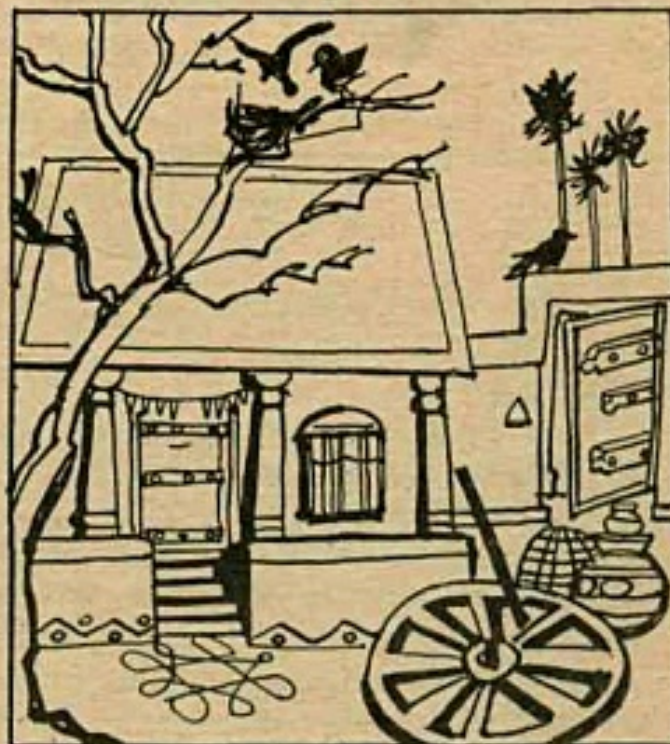
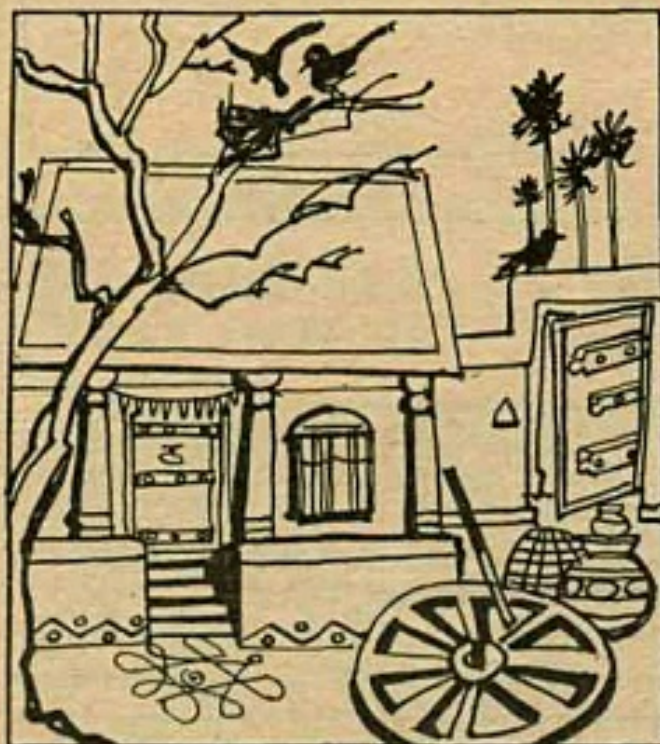
—Editor

PUZZLE TIME

Can you name these British birds all of which can be seen in Britain?



SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES



ANSWERS: 1. Oystercatcher; 2. Wood Pigeon; 3. Nuthatch; 4. Great Spotted Woodpecker; 5. Great Crested Grebe; 6. Pied Wagtail



It was Raju's little sister Meena's birthday. It was a grand occasion for Raju. Nandu, Vinay, Rekha, Ashok all were to come with beautiful presents.

Raju couldn't think of a gift. He wanted to present something very very very special.

He thought and thought and thought. Suddenly he hit upon an idea.

A mask, a beautiful colourful mask. Green stripes on the cap, pink on the cheeks, crimson lips.

With dashes of paint in no time he painted a mask on a piece of cardboard and cut it into shape.

What a colourful present: Meena was delighted.

Everyone talked about Raju and his wonderful present.

If Raju could paint, so can you.

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